

Where to from here: an approach to ending gender-based violence in LGBTQ+SB communities

A report on the roundtable for specialists
working in the LGBTQ+SB domestic,
family and sexual violence sector.



Developed from a national LGBTQ+SB roundtable, this report addresses ongoing gaps in policy, practice, and funding. It emphasises the urgent need for coordinated, inclusive strategies to prevent violence and improve responses for LGBTQ+SB people across Australia.



Acknowledgement

LGBTIQ+ Health Australia acknowledges the Traditional Owners of country throughout Australia, their diversity, histories and knowledge and their continuing connections to land and community. We pay our respects to all Australian Indigenous Peoples and their cultures, and to Elders of past and present.

The LGBTIQ+SB Communities

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer, sistergirl and brotherboy (LGBTIQ+SB) describes people of diverse genders, sexual orientation and/or intersex status, acknowledging that this acronym reflects Western understandings and privilege.

Just as women and children are not a homogenous group, neither are LGBTIQ+SB people, rather we are a collective of discreet groups with overlapping and intersecting shared experiences. Those within this acronym possess diverse backgrounds, experiences, and social positions, necessitating a wide range of support options.

LHA acknowledges that diversity and personal experience can never be fully reflected in an acronym.

Ongoing Collaboration and Evolving Practice

The roundtable and this accompanying report were conducted in October 2024.

Recognising that terminology, ideas, evidence, and best practice continue to evolve, we acknowledge that this report reflects the thoughts, ideas, and experiences of LGBTIQ+SB experts at that point in time. We also recognise that these perspectives will continue to grow and change.

For this reason, we emphasise that this type of collaboration should not be a one-off event. The most effective way to capture emerging insights and strengthen practice is to meet regularly, share knowledge, and develop collective strategies for change.

This approach aligns with Recommendation 1: to establish a National LGBTIQ+ Safety Alliance that brings together a diverse range of expertise and experiences to inform and guide national policy on the safety of LGBTIQ+ people. This alliance will provide informed advice to governments, national organisations, the DFSV sector, and the broader community.

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Executive Summary

The *Where to From Here: An Approach to Ending Gender-Based Violence in LGBTQ+SB Communities* report outlines the outcomes of a national roundtable focused on addressing domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFSV) in LGBTQ+SB communities. The report stresses the need for a coordinated and inclusive response to violence, reflecting on discussions held by LGBTQ+SB specialists who examined the effectiveness of current frameworks and proposed nine recommendations for enhancing safety, support, and policy for LGBTQ+SB communities.

This roundtable was formed in response to a history of LGBTIQ+SB professionals working with limited opportunities for collaboration and a lack of coordinated strategies within the LGBTIQ+SB DFSV sector. This is further complicated by significant barriers, such as a systemic focus on cisgender men's violence against their cisgender female partners, which results in LGBTIQ+ people being excluded from policy, practice and service frameworks.

A lack of strategic actions and core funding of services and programs in LGBTIQ+SB DFSV has led to persistent gaps in service provision, data collection and prevention initiatives that aim to respond to and reduce violence in this community.

This report underscores the importance of collective and collaborative actions and urges all levels of the Australian government to come together in a spirit of bipartisan collaboration to support and act upon the recommendations in this report.

Recommendations

1. Establish a national LGBTIQ+ safety alliance

Establish a National LGBTIQ+ Safety Alliance that brings together a diverse range of expertise and experiences to inform and guide national policy on the safety of LGBTIQ+ people. The Alliance will include members with lived and living experiences, as well as those with backgrounds in research, program delivery, and policy. This diverse representation will position the Alliance to provide informed advice to governments, national organisations, the DFSV sector, and the broader community.

2. Develop a dedicated LGBTIQ+ action in the Second Action Plan 2027 – 2032

Develop a dedicated LGBTIQ+ action in the Second Action Plan (2027–2032), developed in genuine partnership with LGBTIQ+ professionals and communities. A specific action addressing the needs of LGBTIQ+ people will ensure that these communities are represented in the Government's efforts to reduce violence. This focused action will outline initiatives, activities, targets, and intended outcomes that address the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ people.

3. Build the sustainable capacity of LGBTIQ+ community-led organisations

3.1 Community-led not-for-profit organisations

Build the sustainable capacity of LGBTIQ+ not-for-profit community-led organisations to be leaders and centres for excellence in practice development, advice on policy reform, support inclusion, elevate the voices of lived experience, inform primary prevention and early intervention and deliver intervention services. The vision is for every state and territory to have at least one funded LGBTIQ+ community-led organisations to deliver LGBTIQ+ DFSV programmes and support services.

3.2 Specialist LGBTIQ+ Community Legal Centres

Building the sustainable capacity of community-led organisations includes increased and prolonged funding to specialist LGBTIQ+ Community Legal Centres and programs, with a commitment to extended funding periods to ensure continuity of service provision.

4. Develop a national workforce and service accountability that acknowledges the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ communities

4.1 National workforce development

Any national workforce development strategy (First Action Plan 2023–2027, Action 3) needs to recognise the specific requirements of LGBTIQ+ communities and include nationally recognised, ongoing workforce development programmes and training. Specific targets that relate to LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices will ensure that supports and services are accessible to all LGBTIQ+ people.

4.2 Service accountability

Government-funded organisations delivering DFSV programs and interventions (including those within the criminal justice system) must be held accountable for discriminatory practices and inadequate support for LGBTIQ+ people. Funding bodies are encouraged to adopt a compliance model for commissioning, with established standards to ensure inclusivity and safe practices. Embedding LGBTIQ+ inclusion as a core requirement in funding agreements is strongly recommended.

5. Research to accurately capture LGBTIQ+ people's experiences of violence

5.1 Improved data collection in government-funded research

All government-funded research, including the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) and the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) needs to explore ways that they can accurately capture LGBTIQ+ people and their experiences of violence.

5.2 Ongoing funding for Private Lives and Writing Themselves In

The Private Lives survey requires sustained funding to serve as a regular and reliable source of data concerning LGBTQ+ communities. Continuation of this survey facilitates longitudinal comparisons, as the only large-scale, reliable data source of its kind. Additionally, continued support for Writing Themselves In would be essential to maintain up-to-date insights and inform best practices in service delivery for LGBTIQ+ young people.

5.3 Enhanced data collection in frontline services

Data collection within frontline and government-funded services (including the justice system) should accurately capture LGBTIQ+ people and enable data sharing capabilities. Improved and standardised data collection and analysis can enhance understanding of prevalence and service responses, ultimately leading to targeted interventions, improved policy and planning, and effective tracking of progress towards outcomes.



6. Youth specific DFSV programs

Funding research and programs that explore and address the experiences of LGBTIQ+ young people with violence, particularly family-of-origin violence, is essential. Currently, there is a significant gap in funded initiatives in Australia that focus specifically on LGBTIQ+ young people as both victims and perpetrators of violence.

7. LGBTIQ+ people who use violence

Investment is needed in community-led organisations to deliver programs that work directly with LGBTIQ+ people who use violence, provide sector and workforce development opportunities for the Behaviour Change sector, and implement information and bystander programs for the broader LGBTIQ+ community to raise awareness and support early intervention for those who use violence.

8. Programs responding to and preventing sexual assault in LGBTIQ+ communities

8.1 Investment in LGBTIQ+ community-led sexual violence responses

Long-term core funding directed towards community-led initiatives that provide awareness, education, and support for people who have experienced sexual violence. Community-led responses are tailored to address the specific needs of various populations within LGBTIQ+ communities, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to key community issues.

8.2 Develop respectful relationships, consent and sex education programs created for LGBTQ+ young people

Develop and evaluate a comprehensive and inclusive education program on healthy relationships, consent, and sex education for LGBTIQ+ young people. Existing programmes would benefit from moving beyond merely including one or two examples of LGBTIQ+ relationships and shift towards a focus on combating discrimination-based sexual violence.

9. Primary prevention

9.1 LGBTIQ+ program expansion

Existing LGBTIQ+ community-led primary prevention programs that focus on preventing violence within LGBTIQ+ communities and that challenge hetero-cisnormativity should be recognised, valued and expanded. LGBTIQ+ community-led programmes are best positioned to deliver primary prevention campaigns that address community-specific issues, such as transmisogyny and harmful masculinities within gay male communities.

9.2 Programmes that centre priority populations

Strengthen existing primary prevention initiatives, evolving from a model that merely includes examples of LGBTIQ+ relationships to a gender transformative approach that actively seeks to address the drivers of LGBTIQ+ domestic, family and sexual violence in all settings alongside broader efforts to eliminate violence against women.



Definitions

Community-led is the preferred term chosen by roundtable participants instead of the more commonly used term 'community-controlled'. Community-led organisations are not-for-profit organisations that are predominantly led and governed by people from the LGBTIQ+ communities.

Hetero-cisnormativity is the combination of two terms: heteronormativity and cisnormativity. Heteronormativity includes a suite of cultural, legal and institutional practices that work to explicitly privilege relationships between 'men' and 'women' as the only 'normal' and 'natural' form of relationship and cisnormativity is a structural stigma that denies, ignores, and pathologises the trans experience and trans people – binary and non-binary. Cisnormativity positions expansive expressions of gender as a problem, ignores the validity of non-binary genders and seeks to enforce traditional gender roles and inequalities (the National Plan).

Gender-based violence refers to harmful acts directed at an individual or a group of individuals based on their gender. It is rooted in gender inequality, the abuse of power and harmful norms. While women and girls suffer disproportionately from gender-based violence, the term is also used to describe targeted violence against LGBTIQ+ populations, when referencing violence related to norms of masculinity/femininity and/or gender norms (UN Women).

LGBTIQ+ is the preferred term used by DSS as the acronym used to describe members of the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, intersex, queer and asexual community (the National Plan). The plus (+) indicates other sexual orientations or genders. This acronym is used in the recommendations section of the report to align with the language of the Australian government.

LGBTIQ+SB is used within this report when it is appropriate to make statements which refer to all people of diverse genders, sexual orientation and/or intersex people.

LGBTQ+SB is the term most applicable to the roundtable which this report is referring to. This is to acknowledge that there were no participants at the roundtable who were representing people with innate variations of sex characteristics or asexual and aromantic people.

This report refers to different versions of this acronym, depending on which parts of the community we are referring to.

Sistergirls and Brotherboys (SB) Sistergirl is a term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe gender diverse people who have a female spirit and take on female roles within the community. Brotherboy is a term used by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to describe gender diverse people who have a male spirit and take on male roles within the community (Aboriginal Action Plan).

Trans and gender diverse (TGD) is an inclusive umbrella term that describes people whose gender is different to what was presumed for them at birth (Trans Hub).

Table of key recommendations

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
1 Establish a National LGBTIQ+ Safety Alliance.	Short term (1 year)	Commonwealth government	High
2 Develop a dedicated LGBTIQ+ action in the Second Action Plan 2027 – 2032.	Medium term (2 – 3 years)	Commonwealth government	High
3 Build the sustainable capacity of LGBTIQ+ community-led organisations to have at least one funded community-led organisation in each state and territory to deliver DFSV programmes and support services.	Long term (3–5 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High
4 Develop a national workforce and service accountability that acknowledges the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ communities.	Long term (3–5 years)	Commonwealth government	High
5 Ensure that research accurately captures LGBTIQ+ people and their experiences of violence.	Medium term (2–3 years)	Commonwealth government	High
6 Fund research and programs that explore and respond to LGBTIQ+ young people’s experiences of violence.	Medium term (2–3 years)	Commonwealth and State and territory governments	High
7 Invest in community-led organisations to deliver programs that work directly with LGBTIQ+ people who use violence, provide sector and workforce development opportunities for Behaviour Change sector and implement information and bystander programs for the broader LGBTIQ+ communities.	Long term (3–5 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High
8 Invest in LGBTIQ+ community-led responses to provide awareness, education and support to people who have experienced sexual violence.	Medium term (2–3 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High
9 Expand existing primary prevention programs that focus on preventing violence within LGBTIQ+ communities and that challenge hetero-cisnormativity.	Short term (1 year)	Commonwealth government	High

A note on priorities

The recommendations provided have all been prioritised as ‘high’ due to a prolonged period of limited action in addressing DFSV within LGBTIQ+ communities, which has significantly heightened the urgency for immediate and effective measures. While all recommendations are considered critical, the timeframes have been strategically dispersed for their implementation to ensure that the most urgent needs are promptly acted on while planning for the comprehensive, long-term improvements required to support LGBTIQ+ communities effectively.

Introduction

On 9 October 2024, LGBTIQ+ Health Australia (LHA) hosted a National Roundtable for specialists working in LGBTIQ+SB domestic, family, and sexual violence, titled 'Where to From Here: A United Approach to Ending DFSV in Our Communities'. The roundtable was funded by the Department of Social Services and took place on Naarm (Melbourne) as a single, full-day session.

The roundtable was the first of its kind, providing an opportunity for specialists working in LGBTIQ+SB Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence (DFSV) to engage in discussions regarding responses to the [National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children \(2022–2032\)](#) (the National Plan), its accompanying Action Plans, and the Domestic Family and Sexual Violence Commission's [Yearly Report to Parliament \(2024\)](#).

Ending, or even reducing, DFSV in LGBTIQ+SB communities is complex and requires a committed and coordinated response. For decades, LGBTIQ+SB professionals working in DFSV have operated in silos, which has resulted in limited opportunities for collaboration, a lack of shared responses, and coordinated strategies within the LGBTIQ+SB DFSV sector. This has been further complicated by significant barriers, such as a systemic focus on cisgender men's violence against their cisgender female partners, which mean that many LGBTIQ+SB people are commonly excluded from policy, practice and service frameworks.



A [2023 article in the Journal of Family Violence](#) identified a key factor that hinders the implementation of inclusive services, being the political will and visibility of LGBTQ issues within official policy. The report found that persistent gaps in service coverage result from entrenched structural and systemic barriers. These findings underscore the importance of political advocacy in enhancing service access for LGBTQ victim-survivors and highlight the need for collective and collaborative actions.

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We respectfully urge all levels of the Australian government to come together in a spirit of multipartisan collaboration to support and act upon the recommendations in this report. This critical issue has persisted without adequate resolution, and it is imperative that we advance beyond past shortcomings. Only through unified and comprehensive action can we ensure that policies and initiatives meet the unique needs of LGBTIQ+SB communities and foster a safer, more inclusive society for all Australians.

The DFSV sector is guided by the National Plan and a suite of supporting documents, including the [First Action Plan \(2023–2027\) \(the First Action Plan\)](#), the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan (2023–2025), the [Outcomes Framework \(2023–2032\)](#), the Theory of Change, the Performance Measurement Plan, and the [Yearly Report to Parliament](#).

The National Plan is a crucial initiative aimed at addressing and preventing gender-based violence in Australia. While the plan explicitly includes LGBTIQ+ populations and provides a framework for combating violence, it is essential to acknowledge both its strengths and gaps concerning LGBTIQ+SB communities.



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This report outlines key discussions from the roundtable and highlights some of the challenges faced by professionals working in the DFSV sector. Participants at the roundtable, collaborated and developed a set of key asks and recommendations to be presented to the Department of Social Services and other relevant government departments, to end gender-based violence, with an intentional focus on LGBTQ+SB communities.

The goals of the roundtable were to foster collaboration between individual workers and the organisations they represent, to discuss challenges and develop a plan for moving forward and to provide recommendations for state and territory governments to include LGBTQ+SB people and children in Australia's commitment to ending all forms of gender-based violence.

This report serves as an advocacy tool, summarising the ideas and experiences of experts in the field of LGBTQ+SB DFSV. Its intention is to inform, engage, and guide relevant stakeholders, decision-makers, and funding bodies. Ultimately, the aim is to provide readers with the necessary information and advice to facilitate action.

We encourage the dissemination of the report to Parliamentarians, all government bodies involved in combatting gender-based violence, as well as the Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Commission, for consideration.

Overview of national frameworks and their relevance to LGBTIQA+SB communities

The current National Plan builds on the Australian Government’s commitment to intersectionality, which began with the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and their Children 2010–2022 (the First National Plan).

The current National Plan explicitly acknowledges that LGBTIQA+ populations are impacted by gendered violence; therefore, the experiences and needs of LGBTIQA+ people of all genders are included within the plan. Additionally, the term ‘woman’ now specifically encompasses both cisgender and transgender women. The National Plan highlights that LGBTIQA+ people experience violence in their intimate partner relationships at levels comparable to those in cisgender heterosexual relationships, and that they also face significant violence within their families of origin, particularly as children and young people.

Inclusion in the National Plan is critical in recognising, responding to and ending violence within LGBTIQA+ communities. The foundations have been laid for governments, programs, and services nationally, to collaborate with LGBTIQA+ communities. Clear, targeted actions, a plan for implementation and the necessary resources for implementation are urgently needed.

This roundtable calls for the effective implementation of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander First Action Plan 2023–2025.

The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan was developed in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence. The strength and knowledge of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people played a critical role in shaping this Action Plan. It recognises that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, governments, relevant sectors, and communities must work collaboratively to ensure the safety of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.

Reform Area 5 in the Aboriginal Action Plan focuses on inclusion and intersectionality. Success in this reform area relies on the integration of inclusion and intersectionality into all service design, delivery, and evaluation for family, domestic, and sexual violence programs. Achievements in Reform Area 5 will benefit LGBTIQA+SB people and all diverse populations who are at greater risk of violence.

The National Plan and its accompanying documents are vital resources guiding the work of the LGBTIQA+SB sector as are the numerous relevant national and state-based strategies. These include for example:

National:

- The 10 Year National Action Plan for the Health and Wellbeing of LGBTIQA+ people (due to be released end of 2024)
- The National Housing and Homelessness Plan (not yet released)
- [The National Strategy to Prevent and Respond to Child Sexual Abuse 2021–2030](#)
- [Australia’s Disability Strategy 2021–2031](#)
- [National Alcohol Strategy 2019–2028](#)

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State and Territory:

- [ACT Women's Plan 2016–26](#)
- [The NSW Sexual Violence Plan 2022–2027](#)
- [The NSW Domestic and Family Violence Plan 2022–2027](#)
- [The Northern Territory Gender Equality Action Plan 2022–2025](#)
- [Northern Territory's Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Reduction Framework 2018–2028: Safe, Respected and Free from Violence](#)
- [Queensland's Domestic and Family Violence Prevention Strategy 2016–2026](#)
- [Not Now, Not Ever: Putting an end to domestic and family violence in Queensland](#)
- [South Australia's Women's Safety Strategy 2011–2022](#)
- [Survivors at the Centre: Tasmania's Third Family and Sexual Violence Action Plan 2022–2027](#)
- [Free from violence: Victoria's prevention strategy](#)
- [Ending Family Violence: Victoria's Plan for Change](#)
- [Strong Foundations: Building on Victoria's work to end family violence](#)
- [Victoria's Family Violence Reform Rolling Action Plan 2020–2023](#)
- [Safe and Strong, Victoria's Gender Equality Strategy](#)
- [Path to Safety: Western Australia's Strategy to Reduce Family and Domestic Violence 2020–2030](#)

A critical review of all relevant strategies is necessary to identify opportunities for alignment and mutual support, as well as to measure their implementation and success. All national and state strategies would benefit from undergoing holistic development to ensure representation of all priority populations. An implementation plan of key strategies and action plans is essential to achieve tangible benefits for the communities they aim to serve.



Context of the roundtable event

The rate of women killed by an intimate partner in Australia increased by nearly [30% in 2022–23](#) compared to the previous year. When the roundtable was held, [Destroy the Joint](#) had recorded 54 women murdered by an ex/intimate partner in Australia this 2024 calendar year, this number significantly increased between the time of the roundtable and writing this report.

This number does not include some male and transgender LGBTQ+SB people who were murdered by partners or family members in 2024, including Luke Davies and Jesse Baird, who were killed in Sydney in February, Van Chinh Vu, who was murdered in Sydney in May, and a sistergirl (her name is not being used for cultural reasons) who was murdered in Darwin just two days before the roundtable. As noted on page 26 of this report, although the Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program identifies intimate partner homicide cases in same-sex relationships, it does not account for trans or gender-diverse victims, nor does it identify LGBTQ+SB victims of family violence, making it difficult to ascertain an accurate rate of homicide cases within LGBTQ+SB communities.

It is important to note that while the roundtable focused on a national response, each state and territory has a distinct landscape, particularly regarding recognition of and violence within LGBTQ+SB communities. Each state and territory have frameworks that operate alongside the National Plan, with varying levels of inclusion for LGBTQ+SB communities. The approaches taken by state and territory governments and localised services differ, as do their financial investments. The level of investment in Victoria far exceeds that of any other state, followed by the NSW Government, enabling community-led organisations in Victoria and NSW to spearhead much of this work both locally and nationally.

Despite the challenges these discrepancies create for achieving a unified national response, there is also an opportunity for state representatives to learn from initiatives undertaken in other jurisdictions.

Under the National Plan, the Australian Government has invested in programs specifically tailored to LGBTQ+ communities. These include the 15 frontline workers initiative which was rolled out in community organisations across the country, national research into sexual assault in LGBTQ+ communities (the Gendered Violence Research Network), three sexual violence prevention pilots (LHA), a series of primary prevention campaigns (ACON) and a new national framework to prevent gender-based violence in LGBTQ+ communities (Our Watch). While these steps are significant, it is essential to recognise that further efforts are needed to achieve comprehensive and sustainable solutions. Continued commitment and expanded initiatives will ensure long-term positive outcomes for all affected communities.

Participants and Stakeholders

The roundtable brought together 22 participants from the LGBTQ+SB SDFV sector, including representatives from New South Wales (4), Victoria (9), Queensland (6), South Australia (2), and Western Australia (1), collectively representing 16 organisations. Three observers from the Department of Social Services and one from the Domestic, Family and Sexual Violence Commission attended the morning session, alongside three facilitators with extensive experience in the LGBTQ+SB SDFV sector. Two notetakers, who were junior staff from one of the participating organisations, also supported the proceedings.

Discussion points and challenges raised

Summary of main discussion points:

Recognition of progress

The increased awareness, recognition, and investment in the LGBTQ+SB DFSV sector over the past decade has led to substantial growth and strengthening. In a sector that often faces uncertainty, it is essential to reflect on our progress rather than solely focus on challenges. The last decade has provided valuable data, research, innovative programmes, stronger stakeholder relationships, and a solid foundation for ongoing expansion and improvement in our work.

Diversity of advisors

While government departments, the DFSV sector, and other relevant sectors have improved in consulting representatives of priority populations, the LGBTIQ+SB sector often sees the selection of a single representative for advisory groups and consultations. Frequently, the same people are engaged for multiple opportunities. This has resulted in a sole person being tasked with speaking on behalf of all LGBTIQ+SB people across the country. LGBTIQ+SB people are not a homogenous group, and risks overlooking the diverse experiences and challenges across these communities. It is essential to invite a variety of representatives from different communities across the country to share their insights and expertise (recommendation 1).

Additionally, collaborative efforts between lived experience representatives and professionals working in the LGBTIQ+ SB DFSV sector will yield significant outcomes and enhance impact.

Location-based inequality

Everyone deserves to live free from DFSV, irrespective of their location. Currently, policies, legislation, resources, and support options vary significantly between states and territories. Consequently, for example, an LGBTQ+SB victim of domestic family or sexual violence in Melbourne will have vastly different support options compared to someone in regional Western Australia. Investing in at least one community-led LGBTQ+SB organisation to be delivering programs and services locally in every state and resourced to provide outreach, along with scaling up national programs, will help address these disparities (recommendations 3, 4).

Inconsistent capacity across community-led organisations

Community-led organisations across Australia have varying levels of capacity, which has been influenced by historical funding patterns. Organisations in larger cities such as Sydney and Melbourne, have benefitted from substantial HIV/STI funding over decades, enabling them to build significant infrastructure to more readily manage smaller grant opportunities, such as those in the DFSV sector. This has created an uneven landscape, where smaller organisations outside these areas lack the capacity to develop and sustain comprehensive DFSV programs, underscoring the need for targeted capacity-building initiatives (recommendations 3).

It was noted at the roundtable that government departments could note the adaptability and progress made by HIV/AIDS organisations in broadening their scope to meet the evolving needs of their communities. It is critical that government departments break down silos and work with an intersectional lens regarding issues related to social determinates of health.

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Trans and gender diverse representation

Transgender and gender-diverse (TGD) people are rarely represented in decision-making processes and often excluded from consultations. Trans-led organisations frequently do not receive DFSV funding. Investment in organisations that are TGD led, which run programs specifically for the TGD communities, is crucial. Although TGD people are acknowledged in the National Plan, there are no specific actions directed towards them. Not adequately recognising or specifically addressing the needs of TGD people, has resulted in services that are not tailored to their experiences or unique vulnerabilities. TGD people may experience prejudice and stigma both from service providers and within the broader society. This can deter TGD people from seeking help or contribute to negative experiences when they do engage with services. We encourage all organisations to ensure that TGD voices are consulted and meaningfully included in discussions and planning (recommendations 1, 2, 3).

Representation from people with innate variations of sex characteristics

Recognising that there was no intersex representation at this roundtable, it was noted that there is very little recognition of intersex people, and organisations as a priority population, separate to LGBTQA+ people. Intersex advocates are often not involved in making decisions that impact their communities. Investment in organisations that are intersex-led, which run programs specifically for these communities, is crucial (recommendations 1, 2, 3).

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander wisdom

It is valuable to investigate how policy, planning, and advocacy can centre Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices, with elders being respected and listened to. By prioritising the most marginalised groups, we can develop effective and inclusive services. Existing systems in health, education, and criminal justice are rife with inequality and privilege. Until this changes, these systems will continue to reinforce the notion that it is acceptable to exert power over others. For instance, in the Northern Territory, the age of criminal responsibility was reverted to ten years (from twelve years), exemplifying how systems can revert progressive change and perpetuate violence against children by denying them their rights and genuine care (recommendations 1, 4).

As noted by Our Watch in *Changing the Picture*, violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people stems from the impacts of colonisation and gender inequality. Non-Indigenous people and organisations can learn from First Nations peoples through storytelling, two-way teachings, and cultural obligations.

Intersectionality

Few organisations effectively address intersectionality. Priority populations are often treated as separate groups, leading to organisations focusing on one aspect of a person at the expense of a cross-section of experiences. For example, programs for LGBTQI+ people may not adequately consider cultural differences. Similarly, Aboriginal organisations may not engage with LGBTQI+ communities. Improving workforce development, data collection, compliance models, and fostering cross-collaboration would significantly enhance this area (recommendations 1, 4).

Areas of focus

There have historically been, and continue to be, significant gaps in the work being undertaken within the LGBTQ+SB DFSV sector. There is a need for a greater emphasis on children and young people, especially concerning family-of-origin violence and sexual assault outside of intimate partner violence. While there has been a growing focus on working with people who perpetrate abuse, much more effort is required in this area (recommendations 6, 7, 8).

Ongoing invisibility

The LGBTQ+ DFSV sector began to emerge in Australia in the early 2000s, following prior research in this area. Since then, a significant amount of research, new programs, and innovative initiatives have been developed. However, LGBTQ+SB initiatives and research are rarely acknowledged in national reviews and evaluations. As a result, LGBTQ+SB DFSV issues often appear to be an afterthought, with LGBTQ+SB communities being inadequately integrated into existing models that were not designed to accommodate specific needs. This lack of appropriate evaluation and consideration limits our ability to contribute meaningfully to broader discussions on gender-based violence. There is a serious concern that LGBTQ+SB victims of DFSV will not be accurately counted, and that our communities will be overlooked in the National Plan Evaluation Framework (recommendation 5).

Lack of housing options

The gendered nature of crisis services and the national shortage of social and affordable housing results in many LGBTQ+SB people lacking safe housing options. Safe housing is vital for recovery and the prevention of further violence, as well as addressing comorbid health and mental health issues.

Most domestic violence refuge services do not accommodate men, and shared homelessness services for men may not be appropriate and safe in domestic violence contexts. Many refuge and non-refuge DFSV services are exclusively funded for women and children, effectively excluding men and non-binary people. Transgender women and gender-diverse clients are often turned away from refuge services or directed to independent housing, thereby missing out on supportive community connections and service responses available to other refuge clients. These decisions often rely on staff assessments of an individual's appearance and perceived comfort of other clients.

While people have the right to housing options—ideally including LGBTQ+SB specific and safe mainstream options—there is a need for more data on LGBTQ+SB people's access to services and experiences of service provision, to create a comprehensive plan for refuge development that better serves LGBTQ+SB communities. Core and cluster models offer the potential for servicing LGBTQ+SB people, but further evaluations are necessary (recommendations 4, 5).

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Connecting with mainstream services

While many roundtable participants noted positive partnerships with mainstream organisations and a genuine interest in LGBTQ+SB inclusion from the men's violence against women sector, misunderstandings surrounding the shared experiences of gender-related violence persist. Workforce development strategies that address the specific needs of LGBTQ+SB communities and training programmes to enhance awareness of the common drivers of violence would be beneficial (recommendation 4).

'Moving parts'

People who experience or perpetrate violence often engage with various services, including health, mental health, housing, and alcohol and other drug services. Often government departments and policies lack alignment or cross-collaboration, indicating a need to expand cross-department commissioning. Research has consistently shown significant disparities in health and wellbeing for LGBTQ+SB communities compared to the general population. Alongside the gendered nature of DFSV services, it is crucial that health, homelessness, mental health, and drug and alcohol services incorporate workforce development strategies that train staff to recognise and respond to DFSV (recommendation 4). Given the prevalence of short-term funding and pilot projects within the LGBTQ+SB DFSV sector, mapping existing and past programmes is essential for tracking what has been tried, tested, evaluated, and can be replicated or learned from (recommendation 3).

National consistency

National consistency is imperative to reduce confusion, address location-based inequality, and elevate national standards. Currently, there are no consistent national models for school-based education programs, leading to significant variability in LGBTQ+SB content and the management of disclosures or discrimination.

There is no standard national definition of coercive control or education surrounding it. Establishing national education and definitions that include examples of coercive control in LGBTQ+SB relationships will aid police, courts, and frontline services in recognising the primary aggressor in abusive situations.

Developing consistent national definitions of DFSV that recognise abuse in LGBTQ+SB relationships will influence state and territory legislation and help alleviate inequalities in responses to violence. These definitions should expand to include the experiences of the LGBTQ+SB communities, incorporating a broader conception of family that encompasses chosen families, dating relationships, housemates, and carers. Specific examples of DFSV in LGBTQ+SB relationships—including fetishisation, pressure to conform to rigid gender norms, deprivation or coercion related to gender-affirming interventions, non-consensual medical interventions, corrective rape, conversion therapy, outing and humiliation based on gender and sexual orientation.

Finally, a review of the National, State and Territory DFSV Bench Books is necessary to ensure they are current, consistent, and provide adequate support for the judiciary, police, and legal sectors to respond appropriately to DFSV, particularly within LGBTQ+SB communities (recommendation 4).

Impacts on community

Historically, the DFSV sector has focused predominantly on victim-survivors. While recent efforts have rightly begun to address the needs of people who use violence, the broader impact of DFSV on entire communities remains underexplored. In tight-knit communities, the ramifications of violence are felt more broadly. This was evident at the community vigil for Luke Davies and Jesse Baird in Sydney in March 2024. Furthermore, the increase in dating-app-based attacks, as well as online hostility towards transgender women during the 2024 Olympics, illustrates the pervasive impact on the LGBTQ+SB communities.

Political, religious, and moral values can sometimes impede the development and implementation of effective policies and investment strategies. It is evident that the lives and relationships of LGBTQ+SB people are not always accorded the same value and recognition as those of the broader community. Addressing this disparity is crucial for ensuring equitable policy responses and fostering a truly inclusive society.

When oppressed groups begin to make social progress, they often encounter resistance, sometimes manifesting as violence. It is important to implement strategies to protect LGBTQ+SB communities and the LGBTQ+SB DFSV sector from potential backlash that threatens our core work (recommendation 3).

Phased approach to change

Drawing lessons from the Victorian sector, which saw significant investment in LGBTI+ DFSV following the 2015 Victorian Royal Commission into Family Violence, establishing new services requires a skilled and supported workforce. To effectively roll out new programs, evidence-based planning is essential. Additionally, to support a diverse range of people, it is crucial to listen to their needs. Where possible, timelines for recommendations in this report are staged to ensure that each new development is sequenced and given time to be embedded safely and effectively.



Key asks and recommendations

The following recommendations use the acronym LGBTIQ+ to align with the preferred terminology of the current Australian Government.

1. The establishment of a national LGBTIQ+ safety alliance

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
The establishment of a National LGBTIQ+ Safety Alliance.	Short term (1 year)	Commonwealth government	High

Recommendation:

Establish a national LGBTIQ+ Safety Alliance that unites a diverse range of expertise and experiences to inform and guide national policy regarding the safety of LGBTIQ+ people. Members will represent lived and living experiences, research, program delivery, and policy, positioning them to provide informed advice to governments, national organisations, the DFSV sector, and the broader community.

Existing models:

National Alliances play a crucial role in understanding the experiences and issues affecting women in Australia, ensuring their voices are central to the policy development process.

Currently, six National Women's Alliances collaborate with the Office for Women and the Government to inform policy and decision-making in the following priority areas:

- Women's Safety
- Women's Economic Security and Leadership (Equality Rights Alliance)
- Women from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds (Harmony Alliance)
- Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Women
- Women Living in Rural, Regional, and Remote Areas of Australia
- Women with Disability

While an LGBTIQ+ Alliance would represent people of all genders, its inclusion within the existing National Women's Alliance model is appropriate, as LGBTIQ+ people have been considered in the National Plan to End Violence Against Women and Children.

Evidence:

In 2023, the Global Institute for Women's Leadership at The Australian National University was commissioned by the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet to evaluate the suitability of the National Women's Alliances (NWA) model, in collaboration with the Office for Women. The _ indicates that the NWA model effectively channels women's voices to government and is largely achieving its intended outcomes.

The report highlights that the Alliance's current operations rely heavily on the voluntary contributions of many women, indicating a need for additional resources and support to maximise the NWA's impact: "currently, the full effectiveness of the model is constrained by inadequate resourcing and restrictive grant management procedures." To realise its full potential and avoid overburdening an already stretched sector, it is essential that this Alliance receives comprehensive and adequate funding.

2. A dedicated LGBTIQ+ action in the Second Action Plan 2027 – 2032

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Develop a dedicated LGBTIQ+ action in the Second Action Plan 2027 – 2032.	Medium term (2 – 3 years)	Commonwealth government	High

Recommendation:

Develop a dedicated LGBTIQ+ action in the Second Action Plan (2027–2032), developed in genuine partnership with LGBTIQ+ professionals and communities. A specific action addressing the needs of LGBTIQ+ people is essential to ensure that these communities are not an afterthought in efforts to reduce violence. This focused action will outline initiatives, activities, targets, and intended outcomes that address the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ people.

Existing Models:

A dedicated Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Action Plan (2023–2025) complements the First Action Plan. It was developed in genuine partnership with the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Advisory Council on Family, Domestic, and Sexual Violence.

This stand-alone Action Plan was necessary to implement targeted actions addressing the disproportionate rates of violence experienced by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women and children.

The inclusion of a dedicated Action Plan for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples, along with a specific action for LGBTIQ+ people within the Second Action Plan (2027–2032), acknowledges that certain community groups require solutions distinct from the mainstream approaches underpinning the National Plan and the DFSV sector. This is particularly relevant for LGBTIQ+ communities, who often do not align with the legislative, programmatic, and framework contexts that focus on women as victims and their male partners as perpetrators.

Evidence:

In 2022, KPMG released the report titled [Evaluation of the National Plan to Reduce Violence Against Women and Their Children \(2010–2022\)](#). The evaluation identified several lessons and future directions for consideration in developing the current National Plan and other policy responses related to DFSV reforms.

Regarding action plans, the evaluation report made two recommendations. The first is that the National Plan should continue to be implemented through rolling action plans. The second recommendation specifically emphasises the need to implement actions that directly address the needs of diverse groups:

“Under the new National Plan, any Action Plans should give sufficient regard to the needs of diverse population groups, including addressing gaps in funding, policy, service delivery, and data collection for diverse groups”.

3. Build the sustainable capacity of LGBTIQ+ community-led organisations

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Build the sustainable capacity of LGBTIQ+ community-led organisations to have at least one funded community-led organisation in each state and territory to deliver DFSV programmes and support services.	Long term (3-5 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High

Recommendation:

3.1 Build the sustainable capacity of community-led not-for-profit organisations.

Build the sustainable capacity of community-led organisations to be leaders and centres for excellence in practice development, advice on policy reform, support inclusion, elevate the voices of lived experience, inform primary prevention and early intervention and deliver intervention services. Community-led organisations include LGBTIQ+ organisations, as well as trans-led organisations who are well placed to deliver programs to trans and gender diverse communities, organisations for people with innate variations of sex characteristics (intersex people) and queer-Aboriginal programs who can provide culturally safe places for LGBTIQ+SB Aboriginal people

Our vision is for every state and territory to have at least one funded LGBTIQ+ community-led organisation to deliver LGBTIQ+ DFSV programmes and support services. To facilitate this state-based work, fully funded coordinating roles are necessary to implement systems that support often siloed initiatives. LGBTIQ+ DFSV work needs to be positioned as core business rather than how it is currently funded – as short-term or ‘pilot’ projects. Long-term funding allows for effective co-design and collaboration, fostering relationship-building and evaluation. Funding needs to adequately cover the full costs of delivering work, enabling the recruitment of multiple workers and incorporating management and supervision structures.

Given the prevalence of short-term funding and pilot projects within the LGBTIQ+ DFSV sector, mapping existing and past programmes is essential for tracking what has been tried, tested, evaluated, and can be replicated or learned from.

Existing models:

Following the Victorian Government’s Royal Commission into Family Violence, Thorne Harbour Health received funding to expand the scope of its family violence programs. The work of Thorne Harbour Health was reflected on in the report: [Opening Doors, Case Studies of promising Practice](#). The report found that “as a result, and through concomitant internal capability building and the leadership role of the organisation in state and nationwide advocacy around addressing family violence in LGBTIQ populations, Thorne Harbour Health is now one of the largest community-controlled specialist LGBTIQ family violence services in Australia”.

The report highlights three key lessons learnt from their review into Thorne Harbour’s programs, they are:

- Centring community accountability improves safety and quality
- Political will and investment can be transformative
- Working in systems and not silos

Evidence:

Action 3 in the First Action Plan aims to increase and strengthen the capability of mainstream and specialist workforces to deliver quality services, activities, and programmes tailored to the unique experiences of all victim-survivors.

Ongoing investment in both community-led specialist services and inclusive, accessible mainstream services is essential, with a vision of ‘many doors’ as a minimum and ‘no wrong door’ as the gold standard. [Australian studies](#) indicate that LGBTIQ+ people underutilise health, social, and community services due to actual or anticipated experiences of discrimination from service providers. This may lead LGBTIQ+ people to withhold disclosures of violence from police, service providers, or clinicians, potentially prolonging their recovery and keeping them in unsafe situations.

LGBTIQ+ community-led services provide people with the option to choose between community-led and inclusive mainstream services. Many LGBTIQ+ people prefer support from practitioners and services that deeply understand their lived experiences. Community-led organisations are governed by and for affected communities, enabling them to deliver trusted and culturally appropriate services. However, many LGBTIQ+ people also seek access to mainstream services known for their inclusivity.

Aurora & GiveOUT produced a report titled: [Where are the Rainbow Resources?](#), which included an analysis of the financial statements of the 76 registered LGBTIQ+ charities in Australia and found that they receive in total only 6 cents out of every \$100 of government funding that is received by Australian charities. This lack of investment in LGBTIQ+ organisations has resulted in the inability for services to meet demand, retain staff and grow their programs.

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Recommendation:

3.2 Build the sustainable capacity of specialist LGBTIQ+ Community Legal Centres

Building the sustainable capacity of community-led organisations includes increased and prolonged funding to specialist LGBTIQ+ Community Legal Centres and programs in each state and territory, with a commitment to extended funding periods to ensure continuity of service provision. With increased funding, specialist Community Legal Centres can effectively address the unique and systemic challenges faced by the LGBTIQ+ communities (and other priority populations, such as sex workers), ensuring access to critical legal services that are safe, affirming, and trauma informed. The request is to establish a sustainable specialist legal centre or programme in each state or territory as a primary hub of expertise, capable of providing high-quality, tailored, and free legal services while also resourcing peer-led training and capacity building within the broader CLC sector.

Existing models:

Community Legal Centres (CLCs) have been instrumental in delivering legal assistance to the most vulnerable and disadvantaged Australians for over five decades. They offer supplemental legal services when Legal Aid and the private legal sector are inaccessible, providing evidence-based, multidisciplinary, and collaborative approaches to high-quality, free legal services, community education, and law reform initiatives.

However, CLCs regularly face severe funding and workforce shortages that impede their ability to provide necessary support. Federal funding for the community legal sector remains unallocated beyond June 2025, placing the four existing specialist LGBTIQ+ legal services (in QLD, NSW and Vic) at significant risk. The 2023 federal budget allocated less than 1/100th of the required funding to CLCs, further jeopardising their capacity to serve vulnerable communities.

Evidence:

Specialist LGBTIQ+ CLCs are vital in responding to DFSV within LGBTIQ+ communities. [An Independent Review of the National Legal Assistance Partnership 2020–25 | Attorney-General's Department](#) recommended LGBTIQ+ people in the list of priority groups and called for additional funding allocations, citing 'there is strong, qualitative evidence to indicate unmet legal needs in different areas of law'.

[A recently released report by Community Legal Centres Australia](#) estimates that legal service centres across the country had to turn away over 350,000 people in the 2022–23 period, despite the fact that demand for the services increased by 89% from the year prior. LGBTIQ+ people are especially vulnerable to this underfunding, considering a distinct lack of services that are designed with LGBTIQ+ people in mind.



4. Develop a national workforce and service accountability that acknowledges the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ communities

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Develop a national workforce development strategy that acknowledges the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ communities.	Long term (3–5 years)	Commonwealth government	High
Government funded organisations need to be held accountable for discriminatory practices or inadequate support to LGBTIQ+ people.	Long term (3–5 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High

Recommendation:

4.1 National workforce development

The Australian Government is committed to developing and sustaining a strong national workforce by addressing workforce planning, preparation, sector governance, coordination, working conditions, and professional development (First Action Plan 2023–2027, Action 3). Any national workforce development strategy needs to recognise the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ communities and include nationally recognised, ongoing workforce development programmes and training. Specific targets that relate to LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices, will ensure that supports and services are accessible to all LGBTIQ+ people.

Workforce development is an opportunity to address the unique challenges faced by the LGBTIQ+ workforce, including accessible career pathways into the domestic violence sector for people from minority populations, without limiting them to peer roles. Training that is tailored to this specialised field, with additional support and supervision, will promote workforce sustainability and mitigate burnout and vicarious trauma.

Existing models:

Respect Victoria’s Prevention Workforce Strategy is part of the broader effort in Victoria to prevent family violence and promote gender equality. This strategy acknowledges the importance of developing a skilled workforce that can effectively engage in primary prevention initiatives. While it generally focuses on building capability across the prevention sector, it also recognises the need for inclusive practices that address the unique experiences of priority populations, including LGBTIQ+ people.

Respect Victoria’s approach involves working in partnership with LGBTIQ+ organisations and leaders to ensure that prevention programs are culturally safe and relevant. This includes embedding LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices within broader family violence prevention training and resources.

Evidence:

The Indigenous Allied Health Australia (IAHA) has developed a Workforce Development Strategy aligned with its Strategic Plan 2017–2020. The strategy focuses on: Enhancing education and training; supporting career development and promoting leadership. This strategy is a leading example of how workforce initiatives can be designed to meet the unique needs of priority populations.

Recommendation:

4.2 Service accountability

It would be a significant advancement for government-funded organisations delivering DFSV programmes and interventions (including within the criminal justice system) to be held accountable for discriminatory practices and inadequate support for LGBTIQ+ people. Funding bodies should adopt a compliance model for commissioning, establishing set standards to ensure inclusivity and safe practices. We encourage LGBTIQ+ inclusion embedded in funding agreements as a core requirement. Where feasible and appropriate, extend guidelines in funding agreements beyond cisgender, heterosexual women and children to encompass LGBTIQ+ people. To facilitate this growth, these organisations will require access to training and additional resources.

It is recommended that minimum competence requirements be established for organisations who are government funded, including evidence of their capacity to deliver targeted and effective programs. Additionally, encourage generalist workers and services to develop programs in partnership with community-led organisations to leverage specialised knowledge and trust within the community. This approach could also include consideration of in-reach services that embed support within community-led organisations to enhance services access and effectiveness.

Existing models:

Respect Victoria is mandated to drive primary prevention of family violence, including for LGBTIQ+ communities. Organisations funded by Respect Victoria must adhere to standards that promote inclusivity and non-discriminatory practices. While this body does not function as a regulatory compliance entity per se, funding agreements often include specific provisions requiring evidence of LGBTIQ+ inclusive practices and non-discrimination as conditions of receiving and maintaining funding.

Respect Victoria's model sets an important benchmark for funding and accountability by promoting best practices in primary prevention and striving for inclusive service delivery.

However, for continued improvement clearer compliance standards, and deeper involvement of community-led organisations in oversight roles can help strengthen the impact of its programs and the effectiveness of its commitment to serving LGBTIQ+ people.

Evidence:

There is growing recognition that LGBTIQ+ inclusion extends beyond basic awareness or competency training; it necessitates a comprehensive strategy for systemic change and service system redesign. As the [Research Matters](#) report states, "LGBTIQ+ inclusion requires health and community services to establish universal policies, systems, and processes that demonstrate cultural safety."

The [2020 Australian Government House of Representatives inquiry into DFSV](#) identified a variety of barriers to LGBTIQ+ people reporting DFSV and seeking help, including homophobia, transphobia and a fear of discrimination. As the National Plan recognises, "LGBTIQ+ people are less likely than the general population to find support services that meet their distinct needs".

Additionally, a [national survey](#) by the University of New South Wales Social Policy Research Centre of 1,157 workers in specialist family, domestic and sexual violence services indicated:

- A majority of workers wanted more training on how violence is experienced by LGBTQ+ people.
- Workers felt there was a lack of training and capacity to support LGBTQ+ communities.
- A general lack of societal knowledge and awareness more broadly of how violence occurs in gender diverse and same-sex relationships.

5. Ensure that research accurately captures LGBTIQ+ people and their experiences of violence

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Ensure that research accurately captures LGBTIQ+ people and their experiences of violence.	Medium term (2–3 years)	Commonwealth government	High
Ongoing funding for Private Lives & Writing Themselves In as regular sources of LGBTIQ+ data.	Short term (1 year)	Any government department – Commonwealth or State or Territory governments	High
Data collection in frontline services, and government funded services needs to accurately capture LGBTIQ+ people.	Long term (3–5 years)	All state and Territory governments	High

Recommendation:

5.1 Improved data collection in government-funded research

All government-funded research, including the Personal Safety Survey (PSS) and the National Community Attitudes Towards Violence Against Women Survey (NCAS) needs to explore ways that they can accurately capture LGBTIQ+ people and their experiences of violence. This should align with the [ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables](#), ensuring survey questions include the experiences of LGBTIQ+ people. Without this inclusion, LGBTIQ+ people will not be measured in the targets set within the Outcomes Framework.

Existing models:

[The Statement on Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation in Health and Medical Research](#) (the Statement) is a joint initiative of NHMRC and the Department of Health and Aged Care and seeks to improve health outcomes by:

- improving knowledge of research gaps related to historical underrepresentation of sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation in various research fields and topics

- improving consideration of, and accurate data collection about, sex, gender, variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation throughout the design, conduct, analysis, reporting, translation and implementation of all research
- promoting increased inclusion of women and men, both cisgender and trans, non-binary people, people with innate variations of sex characteristics and people with diverse sexual orientations in research, particularly where they have been historically underrepresented or excluded
- promoting effective, sensitive and safe involvement of people with lived experience in all stages of research projects
- encouraging more effective partnerships between consumers, researchers, clinicians, and other research stakeholders.

These practices aim to ensure that health and medical research produces an evidence base that is relevant to all people in Australia.

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Evidence:

Measurement planning within the Outcomes Framework and The Performance Measurement Plan relies on data that inadequately captures LGBTIQ+ people. Given that LGBTIQ+ people are not accurately represented in the Australian Census, the Personal Safety Survey, or the National Homicide Monitoring Program, there is significant concern that they will not be reflected in the targets established in the Outcomes Framework. Moreover, evidence concerning LGBTIQ+ people's experiences of violence is essential to counter the tendency to politicise and overlook data about these experiences.

The National Plan emphasises that:

Every effort should be made to include LGBTIQ+ people in mainstream data collections using the 2020 ABS Standard for Sex, Gender, Variations of Sex Characteristics and Sexual Orientation Variables, where appropriate.

The NCAS is the world's longest-running population-level survey of community attitudes towards violence against women. Currently, its focus is predominantly on men's violence against women rather than encompassing gender-based violence more broadly. While the NCAS accurately records the gender and sexual orientation of participants—and plans to expand data collection in 2025 to include brotherboy and sistergirl variables—it does not assess community attitudes towards violence against LGBTIQ+ people, nor does it address homophobic, biphobic, or transphobic attitudes, or the prevalence of hetero-cisnormativity. As the NCAS acknowledges, “rigid and hierarchical constructions of sex, gender, and sexuality are implicated in power structures and inequalities that maintain sexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia, forming common drivers of violence against women and against people who do not conform to rigid gender and heterosexual norms.” Highlighting these

phobias and hetero-cisnormative attitudes is crucial for understanding broader societal attitudes. LGBTIQ+ inclusion in the NCAS is not merely about making the survey relevant to these individuals, a nuanced understanding of gendered attitudes is essential to comprehensively grasp violent-supportive attitudes.

[The 2021 NCAS study](#) identified opportunities for greater action, including:

- Employing gender-transformative approaches to challenge heteronormative expectations and norms, as well as problematic heterosexual scripts.
- Listening to and learning from individuals within LGBTQ+ communities.
- Collaborating with LGBTQ+ advocates and communities to address the underlying drivers of violence.

The ABS's Personal Safety Survey (PSS) collects data from individuals aged 18 and over about the nature and extent of their experiences of violence. The 2021–22 PSS marked the first time data on sexual orientation was collected, aiding in understanding the prevalence of family, domestic, and sexual violence among people with diverse sexual orientation. Despite the ABS deeming [data on the LGBTIQ+ community had high public value](#), the current iteration of the PSS fails to adequately capture violence experienced by trans and gender-diverse individuals.

[The Australian Institute of Criminology's National Homicide Monitoring Program](#) (NHMP) is unable to identify trans or gender-diverse victims and offenders. While some relevant information may be documented in police reports or coronial findings accessed through the National Coronial Information System, there is currently no systematic method to ensure all transgender and gender-diverse victims and offenders are included in national data.

Recommendation:

5.2 Ongoing Funding for Private Lives and Writing Themselves In

The [Private Lives](#) survey requires sustained funding to serve as a regular and reliable source of data concerning LGBTQ+ communities. Private Lives is a series of national surveys focussed on the health and wellbeing of LGBTQ+ Australians, including insights into experiences of intimate partner violence, family violence, sexual assault and help seeking behaviour. Continuation of this survey facilitates longitudinal comparisons, and is recognised as the only large-scale, reliable data source of its kind.

Additionally, continued support for [Writing Themselves In](#) would be essential to maintain up-to-date insights and inform best practices in service delivery for LGBTIQ+ young people. Writing Themselves In is the largest national study series exploring the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ young people in Australia. Additional funding would allow for an increased focus on young people's experience of violence and would allow for greater jurisdictional analysis of past and future reports in order to tailor responses and service provision to meet the specific needs of LGBTIQ+ young people based on demographic details as well as experience.

Existing models:

The inaugural Private Lives survey was released in 2006, marking it as the largest survey of its kind conducted globally at that time. It remains the most significant Australian study on the health, wellbeing, and safety of LGBTQ+ people. Subsequent iterations – Private Lives 4 and beyond are currently unfunded. The most effective way to measure changes in experience and progress is to guarantee reoccurring funding to produce the report every four to five years, as these surveys are crucial for understanding violence and help-seeking behaviours in LGBTQ+ communities. The Australian Institute of Health and Welfare (AIHW) relies heavily on Private Lives as a primary data source for LGBTQ+ populations. An example of effective data collection is the [Australian Human Rights Commission's \(AHRC\) national survey on workplace sexual harassment \(2022\)](#), which successfully captures and shares data specifically on the experiences of LGBTQ+ people.

The *Writing Themselves In* research has been instrumental in enhancing the understanding of LGBTIQ+ young people's experiences in Australia. Conducted periodically, this national study captures data on the health and wellbeing of LGBTIQ+ young people. While this series plays a crucial role in policy development and service design, there is currently no specific indication of new funding allocated for future iterations.

Recommendation:

5.3 Enhanced data collection in frontline services

Data collection within frontline and government-funded services (including the justice system) should accurately capture LGBTIQ+ people and enable data sharing capabilities. While we recognise the complexities involved in adding variables into existing data sources and increasing data input from users, improved and standardised data collection and analysis can enhance understanding of prevalence and service responses, ultimately leading to targeted interventions, improved policy and planning, and effective tracking of progress towards outcomes.

Existing models:

LHA, along with other community-led organisations and researchers, participated as an active member of the Sex, Sex Characteristics, Gender and Sexual Orientation Reference Group, to provide expert advice on updating the 2016 Sex and Gender Standard.

The 2020 Standard was developed by the ABS to standardise the collection and dissemination of data relating to sex, gender, sex characteristics and sexual orientation. Since its release, government and non-government organisations have begun to introduce the 2020 Standard into existing data sets. An example of this is the roll out of the 2020 Standard across government data sets in Tasmania.

This data can be used to improve policy and planning, and effective tracking of progress towards outcomes as well as data linkage studies all of which are impossible if people's sex, gender, innate variations of sex characteristics and sexual orientation are not captured as standard demographic variables.

Evidence:

Recommendation 40 of the [Commonwealth Parliamentary Inquiry into family, domestic and sexual violence \(2021\)](#) states that the Australian Government should:

- Develop guidelines for data collection regarding sexual orientation and gender as they relate to experiences of violence, as part of government-funded research and service provision.
- Review best practice models to inform appropriate responses.
- On 23 August 2024, the Australian Government received the final report from the expert panel appointed to conduct a [rapid review of evidence-based approaches to prevent gender-based violence](#) (the Rapid Review). Recommendation 20 highlights that Commonwealth and state/territory governments need to enhance data collection related to domestic, family, and sexual violence (DFSV), including:
 - Increasing intersectional and disaggregated data, with a particular focus on improving data on LGBTIQ+ experiences.

Finally, as was clearly stated in the Commissioner's Yearly Report: [The Australian Government must strengthen measures that relate to the system experience of people who have experienced domestic, family and sexual violence, particularly the experiences of priority communities.](#)

6. Fund research and programs that explore and respond to LGBTIQ+ young people's experiences of violence

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Funded research and programs that explore and respond to LGBTIQ+ young people's experiences of violence	Medium term (2–3 years)	Commonwealth government	High

Recommendation:

It is essential to **fund research and programs that investigate and address the experiences of LGBTIQ+ young people with violence**, particularly family-of-origin violence. Currently, there is a lack of funded initiatives in Australia that focus specifically on LGBTIQ+ young people as both victims and perpetrators of violence.

Existing models:

Programs aimed at supporting LGBTIQ+ young people have historically faced public scrutiny and controversy. Ensuring the sustainability of these programs requires comprehensive risk mitigation planning. As societal attitudes continue to evolve, we can learn from past programs and maintain efforts toward positive change that prioritise the well-being of young people.

To prevent or mitigate conservative backlash against future programs aimed at supporting LGBTIQ+ people, it's essential to approach program design, communication, and implementation thoughtfully and ensure initiatives can be adapted to local needs. Programs of this nature require bipartisan support and a sustained commitment to the LGBTIQ+ community that transcends potential negative backlash.

Safe Schools was a program in Australia aimed at creating safe and inclusive environments for LGBTIQ+ students in schools. Initially funded by the Australian Government and later by state governments, the program

provided training, resources, and policy advice to schools on supporting LGBTIQ+ students and addressing bullying based on sexual orientation or gender.

The winding down of this program in many states and territories has left a gap in formal, national-level support for LGBTIQ+ students. Without federal backing, there has been inconsistency in the adoption and implementation of LGBTIQ+ support programs across states.

While the program faced political challenges and changes in funding, it set a precedent for how educational systems can respond to the needs of LGBTIQ+ young people. This program successfully brought LGBTIQ+ issues into the mainstream conversation within educational settings. It adopted a whole-of-school approach that was pivotal in raising awareness among school staff and students about the challenges faced by LGBTIQ+ people and the importance of targeted programs.

The Safe Schools model offers a potential example of how a program can be started federally and then integrated into state-level policies, but it also highlights the complexities and challenges such programs may face in navigating political and public opinion. Future initiatives aiming to support LGBTIQ+ youth might benefit from this model, with a focus on stronger risk mitigation planning to address potential opposition.

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Evidence:

[Recent research](#) indicates that 30% of Generation Z (people born from the mid-to-late 1990s until the early 2010s) identify as part of the LGBTIQ+ communities. It is imperative that responses supporting young people include a substantial focus on LGBTIQ+ people.

The Domestic, Family, and Sexual Violence Commission's Yearly Report to Parliament highlights that targeted efforts are needed for children and young people, a concern mirrored in the broader LGBTIQ+ DFSV sector.

Action 8 in the First Action Plan aims to develop and implement age-appropriate, culturally safe programmes across all four domains, informed by the perspectives of children and young people, to support recovery and healing from trauma, and to intervene early in addressing violence-supportive behaviours. The Australian Government acknowledges that, until now, policies and programmes have not sufficiently prioritised the needs and voices of children as victims of family and domestic violence in their own right.

Furthermore, Action 8 commits to seeking opportunities to listen to the voices of children, to influence and inform policies that address their needs. LGBTIQ+ children and young people with lived experiences of family and domestic violence have yet to receive appropriate, specifically tailored supports and trauma-informed interventions.

“Strategic work should be complemented by more immediate efforts to support children and young people who have experienced violence, including developing tailored and developmentally appropriate, youth-specific service responses for child sexual abuse, children and young people who have experienced family violence, young people using violence at home, and young people using and/or experiencing violence in intimate relationships, drawing on available evidence and practice frameworks.”

Recommendation 5 in the Rapid Review emphasises the importance of adopting a strategic and coordinated approach to embedding the distinct experiences of children and young people. It further stated that:

[Studies on child maltreatment](#) indicate that youths with diverse sexual orientations experience higher rates of maltreatment compared to their heterosexual peers. Increased rates of physical and emotional abuse have been linked to earlier disclosure of sexual orientation. [Another Australian study](#) found that TGD people were three times more likely than their cisgender peers to experience emotional abuse, physical abuse, sexual abuse, and emotional/physical neglect.

7. Invest in community-led organisations to deliver programs that work directly with LGBTIQ+ people who use violence

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Invest in community-led organisations to deliver programs that work directly with LGBTIQ+ people who use violence, provide sector and workforce development opportunities and implement information and bystander programs for the broader LGBTIQ+ communities.	Long term (3-5 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High

Recommendation:

Invest in community-led organisations to deliver programs that work directly with LGBTIQ+ people who use violence, provide sector and workforce development opportunities for the Behaviour Change sector, and implement information and bystander programs for the broader LGBTIQ+ communities to raise awareness and support early intervention for those who use abuse.

Existing Models:

Thorne Harbour Health (Vic) operates an accredited men's behaviour change programme called START, aimed at gay, bisexual, trans, and queer men who wish to change their harmful behaviours in relationships. Thorne Harbour Health has been running its men's behaviour change programmes since the mid-2000s.

ACON (NSW) offers a 10-week online programme for any LGBTQ+ adult (regardless of gender) residing in NSW who may be concerned about their behaviours in a relationship. Following their in-person pilot programme in 2020, which was part of an ANROWS-funded research trial, ACON has secured funding to conduct only two iterations, with an additional two funded until 2025. The October 2024 enrolment is currently at capacity.

Evidence:

A collaborative research project between ACON and Relationships Australia New South Wales and funded by ANROWS titled: [Developing LGBTQ Programs for Perpetrators and Victims/Survivors of Domestic and Family Violence](#), was designed as a pilot study to adapt and deliver existing perpetrator and victim/survivor group programmes to LGBTQ+ people affected by violence in their intimate relationships. This research aims to improve recognition and understanding of LGBTQ+ intimate partner violence (IPV) among both mainstream domestic and family violence service providers and within LGBTQ+ communities.

One of the key findings from this report is that DFV/IPV in LGBTQ+ relationships can be challenging to identify and understand due to the predominant "heterosexual face" of domestic violence. The report makes three recommendations:

- Improve recognition and understanding of LGBTQ+ DFV/IPV among DFV and mainstream service providers and LGBTQ+ communities.
- Increase confidence and skills within the DFV sector and police workforce for engaging with LGBTQ people experiencing DFV/IPV.
- Develop and trial tailored programmes to ensure that the unique and diverse needs of LGBTQ+ populations are addressed.

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Another significant study is [Catalysts of Change: Interventions and service pathways for gay, bisexual, trans and queer \(GBTQ\) men who have used family violence in Victoria, Australia](#) which explores how LGBTQ men who have used violence in intimate or family relationships are encouraged to change their behaviour and commit to a life of non-violence.

Drawing on interviews with users of violence, victim-survivors, and practitioners (many from LGBTQ+ community-controlled organisations) in Victoria, this research identifies how users of violence access services and the approaches employed by service providers to engage and retain them in behaviour change programmes.

A key finding from this report indicates that:

Service responses that promote early engagement and establish clear pathways to LGBTQ+ community-controlled organisations and other appropriate services can facilitate behaviour change.

The report also found that LGBTQ users of violence faced challenges in accessing suitable interventions, such as Men's Behaviour Change Programs (MBCPs). Factors contributing to these challenges included low levels of societal awareness regarding family violence in LGBTQ relationships, limited family violence service options for LGBTQ+ people, safety concerns associated with "mainstream" MBCPs, and co-existing issues related to alcohol and other drug use, mental health, and homelessness.

Both reports highlight the need for a combination of community-led responses and increased awareness and capacity building within mainstream services to effectively intervene with LGBTQ+ people who use violence.



8. Invest in LGBTIQ+ community-led responses to provide awareness, education and support to people who have experienced sexual violence

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Investment in community-led responses to provide awareness, education and support to people who have experienced sexual violence.	Medium term (2–3 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High
Develop respectful relationships, consent and sex education programs created for LGBTQ+ young people.	Long term (3–5 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High

Recommendation:

8.1 Investment in LGBTIQ+ Community-Led Responses

Long-term core funding directed towards community-led initiatives that provide awareness, education, and support for people who have experienced sexual violence. Community-led responses are tailored to address the specific needs of various populations within LGBTIQ+ communities, ensuring relevance and responsiveness to key community issues. This investment will facilitate access to appropriate information about sexual violence and available support services for LGBTIQ+ people. Additionally, it will foster partnerships between LGBTIQ+ specialist services and mainstream service providers, enhancing responses to disclosures and the provision of support for LGBTIQ+ people accessing mainstream services. There is currently a notable lack of services for people who do not identify as cisgender women, which requires urgent attention.

Existing models:

The Zoe Belle Gender Collective (Vic) is dedicated to supporting the rights and well-being of trans and gender-diverse people. Its flagship program [Transfemme](#), is the only prevention project in Australia specifically focused on preventing intimate partner and

sexual violence experienced by trans women at the hands of cisgender men. Transfemme and the accompanying practice guide takes a holistic approach to sexual violence that spans from primary prevention to early intervention and response. Additionally, it has resources designed by trans women and trans feminine people for cisgender men to help them understand respectful relationships and consent using appropriate language. Other resources provide awareness and education through tools for trans women and trans feminine people to identify red flags, understand their previous experiences, and empower them to navigate sex and relationships. Although the Transfemme project began as a pilot initiative, it is currently unfunded, despite trans women being explicitly mentioned in both state and national family violence strategies.

Evidence:

A new survey conducted by the Gendered Violence Research Network, titled National Survey of LGBTIQ+ Experiences of Sexual Violence, is set to be released in February 2025. This report represents the first large-scale study of LGBTIQ+ experiences of sexual violence, both in Australia and internationally. Preliminary findings have underscored the importance of examining experiences of sexual violence through the lenses of gender and sexual orientation. The

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data indicates significant differences in the proportion of participants who experienced sexual violence during childhood, adulthood, or both, based on their gender and sexual orientation. These factors not only affect the risk of experiencing various types of sexual violence but also influence the age of onset, the risk of revictimization and the context of the violence. Victimization by sexual violence has been linked to profound impacts on health, wellbeing, financial security, and workforce participation, particularly when the violence occurred or began in childhood. Consequently, LGBTIQ+ people most affected by sexual violence often lack the financial resources necessary to access specialised or private healthcare and other forms of support.

In 2019, ACON and the University of Western Sydney released [Sorting It Out](#), research on gay, bisexual, and queer men's attitudes and experiences of intimate partner violence and sexual assault. In this report, half of the respondents agreed that sexual coercion and pressure are common amongst GBQ men. This report clearly showed that there is a need for community-led discussions, education and programs on respectful relationships and sexual ethics that address the diverse lives and experiences of GBQ men.

Recommendation:

8.2 Development of Inclusive Education Programs

Development and evaluation of comprehensive and inclusive education on healthy relationships, consent, and sex education is needed for LGBTIQ+ young people. Many existing school-based educational programmes fail to incorporate examples of LGBTIQ+ relationships, leaving many identifying young people without relevant resources. Existing programmes would benefit from moving beyond merely including one or two examples of LGBTIQ+ relationships and shift towards a focus on combating discrimination-based sexual violence.

Existing models:

Twenty 10 (NSW) and Minus 18 (Vic) are LGBTIQ+–led youth organisations that offer affirming and inclusive programs for young LGBTIQ+ people, as well as co-developed educational resources. One example is the [Safe and Strong guide](#), created in partnership with Meta (Facebook and Instagram) and LGBTIQ+–led organisations such as Black Rainbow, Trans Pride, ACON, Minus18, and Twenty10. This resource serves as an educational tool, providing advice on online safety tailored to the specific experiences of LGBTIQ+ youth. While not focused on respectful relationships, it exemplifies community-specific resources

Evidence:

[The respectful relationships education toolkit](#) created by Our Watch, was developed to support schools in understanding and implementing a whole-of-school approach to preventing gender-based violence. The report states that: *“While gender inequality needs to remain at the centre of efforts to prevent gender-based violence, it must be addressed alongside other forms of discrimination and disadvantage such as racism, ableism and homophobia.”* It goes on to say: *“Schools need to consider the nature of their community and to connect with their department of education and specialist organisations who have knowledge, expertise and experience working with and supporting a range of diverse communities”.*

This is particularly crucial for LGBTQ+ communities, as various [epidemiological studies](#) have shown a correlation between childhood sexual assault and diverse sexual orientations and gender in adulthood which suggests that LGBTQ+ people are targeted for their gender or sexual orientation. This increased vulnerability is often attributed to feelings of isolation, shame, and confusion regarding who they are, which hinder help-seeking behaviours. School-based programmes can play a vital role in challenging these feelings of isolation and confusion.

9. Expand existing primary prevention programs that focus on preventing violence within LGBTIQ+ communities and that challenge

hetero-cisnormativity

Recommendation	Timeframe	Responsibility	Priority
Expand existing LGBTIQ+ primary prevention programs.	Medium term (2–3 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High
All primary prevention programs need to address hetero-cisnormativity and centre priority populations.	Long term (3–5 years)	Commonwealth and State and Territory governments	High

Recommendation:

9.1 Expand existing LGBTIQ+ community-led primary prevention programs

Existing LGBTIQ+ community-led primary prevention programs that focus on preventing violence within and against LGBTIQ+ communities and that challenge hetero-cisnormativity should be recognised, valued and expanded.

LGBTIQ+ community-led programmes are best positioned to deliver primary prevention campaigns that address community-specific issues, such as transmisogyny and harmful masculinities within gay male communities. Community organisations can lead these tailored projects while also enhancing the capacity of the broader prevention system to implement gender-transformative activities that consider the needs of LGBTIQ+ communities alongside those of women. Funding for the entire duration of projects, encompassing planning, delivery, promotion, and evaluation, is essential for ensuring their effectiveness.

Existing models:

At present, there are only a limited number of people in Australia with expertise in the primary prevention of violence within LGBTIQ+ communities. Although primary prevention is a core area of work, it has historically been funded as ‘pilot’ or ‘innovation’ projects for LGBTIQ+ communities, resulting in limited funding and short-term contracts. As of the end of 2024, there are no funded LGBTIQ+ specific primary prevention projects in Australia.

Between 2019 and 2024, ACON (NSW) ran five campaigns showcasing positive examples of LGBTQ+ relationships to challenge the overrepresentation of heteronormative relationships, gender roles, and the normalisation of violence within LGBTQ+ communities. The campaigns included: the At the Front Door campaign, the Our Relationships campaign, the Solidarity and Connection campaign, the Pave the Way campaign, and Family Pride Stories. This work was funded by the Department of Social Services.

Evidence:

[Pride in Prevention: A guide to primary prevention of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ communities](#) was produced by the [LGBTIQ Family Violence Prevention Project 2019–2021](#)(Vic). This groundbreaking initiative, led by Rainbow Health Australia and funded by the Office for Women and the Victorian Department of Premier and Cabinet, addressed critical evidence gaps, enhanced understanding of the drivers of violence, and built expertise within both LGBTIQ+ organisations and family violence primary prevention organisations, enabling them to deliver effective evidence-based programmes. The guide summarises the available evidence (as of 2020) on the drivers of family violence experienced by LGBTIQ+ communities and offers recommendations for priority interventions. It was followed up subsequent guides focussing on key primary prevention approaches including [messaging](#), [partnership](#) and [evaluation](#).

Our Watch received funding in 2024 from the Australian Government Department of Social Services to develop a national framework aimed at preventing gender-based violence against LGBTIQ+ people and communities over the next three years. This initiative, in partnership with Rainbow Health Australia, will build upon both Rainbow Health Australia's Pride in Prevention and Our Watch's Change the Story.

Recommendation:**9.2 All primary prevention programs need to address hetero-cisnormativity and centre priority populations**

A comprehensive, evidence-based, nation-wide primary prevention strategy is necessary to eliminate all forms of gender-based violence. Existing primary prevention initiatives would strengthen from evolving from a model that merely includes examples of LGBTIQ+ relationships to a truly gender transformative approach that actively seeks to address the drivers of LGBTIQ+ domestic, family and sexual violence in all settings alongside broader efforts to eliminate violence against women. Investing in primary prevention programmes that centre on priority populations—those most affected by violence—will foster tailored strategies that resonate across diverse communities. This approach will ultimately contribute to a significant shift in societal attitudes and behaviours towards gender-based violence and address its root causes. The recent rise in violent attacks on gay men via dating apps and public aggression towards transgender women needs to be acknowledged as gender-based violence, and discussions around masculinity must incorporate trans and gender-diverse people.

Existing model:

An example of an Australian primary prevention initiative that centres priority populations is Our Watch's "Changing the Picture". This resource and associated framework were developed to prevent violence against Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander women by addressing the unique drivers of violence in these communities. The initiative acknowledges the intersecting impacts of colonisation, systemic discrimination, and racism and integrates culturally appropriate practices to ensure that prevention efforts are relevant and effective.



“Changing the Picture” is designed with a strong focus on engaging with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities and leaders, ensuring that prevention strategies are community-led and that they build on the strengths and resilience of these populations. It aligns with the broader goal of promoting social and systemic change to address and reduce violence before it occurs, by recognising and responding to the specific contexts and challenges faced by this priority population such as colonisation and racism.

Evidence:

Both [Pride in Prevention](#) and [Change the Story](#) acknowledge significant overlap between the drivers of family violence affecting LGBTIQ+ communities and the drivers of men’s violence against women. As such, any programs or strategies that address rigid gender stereotypes or norms essentially need to also consider cisnormativity and heteronormativity as part of a gender transformative approach.

The Rapid Review outlined five principles to underpin each of its 21 recommendations, emphasising that these principles should guide implementation.

Principle 2 states that Australia must adopt an intersectional approach to preventing domestic, family, and sexual violence, recognising that such violence is symptomatic of broader systemic issues intersecting

with race, class, disability, and sexual orientation. It is crucial to acknowledge the intersectional realities that exacerbate violence for specific groups.

Recommendation 3 stresses the importance of prioritising the experiences of marginalised communities, including LGBTIQ+ communities:

Prioritising the experiences of marginalised groups does not mean diverting from existing primary prevention work, it means expanding our efforts and learning from established programmes and evidence.

‘The Commonwealth and state and territory governments to prioritise the experiences of communities that are marginalised especially Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, migrant and refugee communities, women and children with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ people, older women and regional and remote communities in implementing all of the recommendations in this report. Addressing gender-based violence for communities experiencing intersecting forms of marginalisation lays the foundation for population-wide success. Where applicable, implementation should involve a genuine and sustained co-design approach to ensure that affected communities are identifying priorities of greatest urgency and value’.

Conclusion

The *Where to From Here: An Approach to Ending Gender-Based Violence in LGBTQ+SB Communities* report underscores the urgent need for comprehensive, coordinated efforts to address domestic, family, and sexual violence within LGBTQ+SB communities. The roundtable discussions highlighted persistent gaps in current frameworks and brought to light the importance of inclusive and targeted responses that recognise the unique challenges faced by LGBTQ+SB people.

The nine key recommendations presented in this report aim to guide policy, practice, and research toward a more equitable and effective approach. Establishing a National LGBTQIA+ Safety Alliance will elevate a diverse range of voices, expertise, and experiences to play a crucial role in translating the experiences and issues affecting LGBTQIA+ people in Australia, ensuring their voices are central to the policy development process.

The proposed LGBTQIA+ component in the Second Action Plan (2027–2032), will ensure that this community is meaningfully included in national strategies. The report also emphasises sustainable capacity building in LGBTQIA+ community-led organisations, which is crucial for sustainable service delivery.

Further, the development of a national workforce strategy and the improvement of data collection will ensure services are accessible to all LGBTQIA+ people and that we will be measured in the targets set within the Outcomes Framework.

Youth-focused programs and services, an increase in programs for people who use violence, and expanded primary prevention efforts are vital for addressing violence across all contexts.

To achieve meaningful change, it is essential that stakeholders, including Federal and State and Territory government bodies, commit to these recommendations with adequate resources and unwavering dedication. This report not only serves as an advocacy tool but as a roadmap for strengthening the nation's response to DFSV and support a more inclusive domestic, family and sexual violence sector.

Additional acknowledgements

To victim-survivors

LHA acknowledges and honours all victim-survivors and those impacted by domestic, family, and sexual violence. Your strength and resilience inspire the work undertaken by LHA. LHA is committed to achieving a future free from violence and abuse and to ensure that LGBTIQ+ people remain central to all government responses.

To older LGBTI+ people

LHA thanks older lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and intersex people and those who have passed, for their resilience, courage, and dedication in advocating for rights and recognition. Their struggles and sacrifices have paved the way for greater acceptance and understanding of LGBTIQ+SB people. In honouring their legacy and continuing to draw inspiration from their experiences, LHA remains committed to achieving a more inclusive and equitable future for all members of the LGBTIQ+SB community. Their voices remain vital in our ongoing pursuit of justice and equality.

To DFSV workers

LHA recognises and is grateful for the dedicated professionals and volunteers working in the domestic, family, and sexual violence sector. Your tireless efforts, compassion, and commitment to supporting survivors and addressing the complexities of violence are invaluable. Thank you for your unwavering dedication to creating safer communities and advocating for those in need.

To the Department of Social Services

Gratitude is extended to the Department of Social Services for their unwavering support for the national forum. Their commitment and great interest in the need for the forum has made it possible to bring together diverse voices and foster meaningful discussions on these pressing issues. Thank you for believing in the importance of this initiative.



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